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## Report on Co-Creating Shared Value for SEAMEO Centres and the Southeast Asian Region: Conversations on Corporate Social Responsibility

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### I. Purpose

1 This working paper aims to inform the 2013 SEAMEO Centre Directors Meeting on the summary report and recommendations from learning session on Co-Creating Shared Value for SEAMEO Centres and the Southeast Asian Region: Conversations on Corporate Social Responsibility convened on 27 to 29 May 2013 at SEAMEO INNOTECH in the Philippines.

2 The working paper also seeks further advice from the SEAMEO Centre Directors on the issues and recommendations from the learning session including suggestion to conduct a more detailed study on the implications of these recommendations to SEAMEO Units' planning and operations.

### II. Background

3 As envisaged in the SEAMEO Strategic Plan (2011-2020), the activity was organized by SEAMEO INNOTECH in collaboration with the SEAMEO Secretariat and partners in the private sector. Designed as "Conversations on Corporate Social Responsibility," the learning session was meant to walk key officials of the SEAMEO Centers, Network and Secretariat through in exploring the theory and concepts underpinning CSR and learn from good practices done by the different SEAMEO units and the private sector. It was also designed to give a forum for the SEAMEO Family to actively engage the private sector practitioners of CSR and introduce the services and products of the Center for possible partnership with the private sector representatives.

4 The above-mentioned learning session was conceived to bring together the SEAMEO units and the private sector in partnership to address a broad range of social development issues in the region. It leverages on SEAMEO capabilities and the current drive towards corporate social responsibility. The project further sought to leverage on the visibility of CSR projects that deal with key development concerns, such as education, health the environment, culture, the arts and the region's history and social transformation. The project proposes to take the public-private partnership into a level beyond basic corporate philanthropy, leveraging on the strengths of each partner.

5 As envisaged during the final session of the SEAMEO Strategic Planning Workshop, SEAMEO is regarded as an established development partner in Southeast Asia for promoting cooperation in the fields of education, science and culture, and has much to offer by way of knowledge resources, technology, physical facilities and expertise in a wide range of specialized areas. The corporate world, on the other hand, could complement the Organization's capabilities through its own knowledge resources, operational systems, networks, management expertise and financial resources. Aside from being a learning session, the activity thus sought to initiate the process of dialogue and set them in the road to a meaningful and mutually beneficial partnership through CSR.

### III. Scope

#### A. Summary Report

6 A total of 20 participants representing 10 SEAMEO Centers, Network and the Secretariat participated in the learning sessions, with nine (9) representatives from private corporations, as well as SEAMEO INNOTECH managers, professional and technical staff, foundations and business organizations operating in the Philippines. Three companies were invited to present their CSR programs and share the good practices learned in implementation.

7 The sessions were designed as a series of conversations within the SEAMEO family. The conversation format offered new learning for all who are involved and encourages exchange of ideas and experiences that will create and surface new meanings and a shared understanding. The sessions were structured along the following conversation themes:

- a) CSR Concepts and Frameworks Across Southeast Asia
- b) Models, Winning Practices, Measuring Gains and Sustaining CSR Actions
- c) Current State and Best Practices of CSR in the Philippines and other SEA Countries

8 The Undersecretary for Partnership and External Linkages (Vice Minister) of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd), HE Mr. Mario Deriquito, delivered the keynote message focusing on Strategic CSR. He introduced the Department's programmes in engaging the private sector as part of DepEd's efforts to engage the citizenry, other government agencies and corporations whose CSR programs are focused on education.

9 He further outlined three (3) ways of engagement, the three (3) Ps, which the SEAMEO community may reflect upon:

- a) Practice (Grow your practice of CSR), which involves assessment of the organization, compliance with laws and guidance of governing bodies, dealing with stakeholders, measuring and reporting;
- b) Promotion, involving leveraging institutional strengths and expertise in training and capability-building, research and in promoting CSR in the schools and universities. SEAMEO units may be in a position to influence MOEs in key advocacies.
- c) Partnership, SEAMEO units may leverage strengths and expertise in approaching companies for partnerships.

10 Prof. Dr. Louie A. Divinagracia presented the concepts and theoretical framework underpinning the design and practice corporate social responsibility. The roots of the concept as part of business practice and applications of the different models for CSR were discussed through illustrated lectures and discussions. Through the conversation, the facilitators were able to gain a sense of the state of play on CSR programs and practices of the SEAMEO Centers.

11 The succeeding sessions were spent on presentations and discussions of the diverse experiences of SEAMEO units in planning and implementing CSR activities. Some of the key success factors were identified, particularly those which have resulted in positive impacts to the communities served.

12 The other aspects of the conversations included a school visit which enabled the participants to view at first-hand how a school can mobilize community resources and engage the different stakeholders in the initiatives to improve the academic achievement of the students.

13 A networking lunch and partnership forum presented experiences of three companies operating CSR projects in the Philippines. The networking lunch and forum was attended by representatives of organized bodies, corporate foundations and private companies doing CSR. A lively conversation ensued covering issues such as:

- a) Financing CSR Programmes
- b) Sustainability of CSR Initiatives
- c) Partnerships with Stakeholders
- d) Connecting with the Private Corporations
- e) CSR Initiatives on Health
- f) Relating with the Government
- g) Funding Support for CSR
- h) Entrepreneurship Training in the Rural Areas
- B. Recommendations from the Learning Session on Possible SEAMEO Strategies on Corporate Social Responsibility

14 The final session was devoted to mapping out SEAMEO strategies on CSR and the succeeding steps. The participants agreed to adopt, as a way of describing the SEAMEO mandated activities, the term “*SEAMEO Social Responsibility*” or *SSR*.

15 *Social Responsibility* within Centre-operations must be adhered to as well as promotion of sustainable human development. While institutional and individual partnership is a key concept in undertaking social responsibility projects, further discussion emphasized the need to observe the professional ethics following international conventions and professional ethical standards, those in the health related fields have set limitations on engaging pharmaceutical companies, food manufacturing concerns, health care providers, and other entities that pose potential conflict of interest issues.

16 Ethics in establishing partnerships and in doing social responsibility initiatives should also be reflected in a “SEAMEO Code of Ethics.” As a general guideline, SEAMEO and its Units/Centres must exercise transparency and greater accountability in its programmes and project actions. There must also be respect for diversity and avoidance of using the initiatives as advertisements.

17 The SEAMEO Units also underlined the need to “walk the talk.” The SEAMEO Units identified the following general principles underpinning SEAMEO Social Responsibility:

- a) As a socially responsibly organization, SEAMEO and its units will contribute to sustainable human development

- b) The “think and act Southeast Asia” mindset with CSR being should be imbedded in the SEAMEO Units’ operations
- c) Subscribe to ethical behaviour and practices
- d) Readiness and commitment to be measured against the goals and principles

18 SEAMEO’s principles of engagement with partners were also enumerated:

- a) Able to co-create with the partners
- b) Adherence to international convention based on trust, close personal contact, and interaction
- c) Acting locally, regionally, and globally
- d) Being able to create a more dynamic network using appropriate technology that will accelerate processes
- e) Systems orientation
- f) Knowing priority of the partners as well as making sure to be careful with who to partner with
- g) Levelling of expectations
- h) Alignment between SEAMEO’s mandates with SEAMEO Centres’ mandates
- i) Inter-centre collaboration
- j) Measuring impact on the community

19 The following issues which were surfaced in the learning session were recommended for discussion in the SEAMEO Centre Directors Meeting 2013 in July 2013:

- a) Reporting mechanisms
- b) Establishment of a SEAMEO-wide working group on SSR
- c) Development of a compendium of SSR exemplars of SEAMEO projects; the compendium can be part of the materials / publications for the SEAMEO 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

20 One other recommendation by the SEAMEO Units is the review of the adopted key performance indicators (KPIs) of the SEAMEO Centres, along with the SEAMEO Strategic Plan to be reconfigured along the lines of SSR. Some of the GRI indicators can be adopted or adapted and aligned with the SEAMEO reporting system. Documentation and consolidation of social responsibility practices across SEAMEO Units must also be undertaken.

### C. Implications of the Recommendations from the Learning Session

21 The discussions in the learning session surfaced a number of issues that relate to CSR but would have major implications to the planning and operational processes of the different SEAMEO Units. These could be summarized thus, among others:

- a) The planning documents for SEAMEO units, particularly the Five Year Plans must reflect the key result areas and the CSR values espoused
- b) Changes in practices and processes may be effected; these may be facilitated by sharing of information and practices
- c) Some changes in the SEAMEO reporting system may also be effected to reflect areas covered in the Global Reporting Initiative
- d) Revisiting the KPIs adopted for the SEAMEO Centers would also be needed.
- e) Further study on the detailed implications on SEAMEO Units' planning and operations should be undertaken in order to determine the scope of the changes that would be needed.

#### **IV. Suggested Agreement**

22 The SEAMEO Centre Directors Meeting 2013:

- a) takes note of the report on Co-Creating Shared Value for SEAMEO Centres and the Southeast Asian Region: Conversations on Corporate Social Responsibility and expresses appreciation for the SEAMEO Secretariat and SEAMEO INNOTECH for organizing the activity; and
- b) provides further advice on the issues and recommendations from the learning session including suggestion to conduct a more detailed study on the implications of these recommendations to SEAMEO Units' planning and operations.